

PREVIOUSLY  
MY SCRIPT - What I intended to say - But I'm not skilled at  
Testimony for 3 minutes: Reading a script out loud. BWA

Detroit's Experience with EFM's and EM's (Emergency Financial Managers and/or Emergency Managers), and so Called Construction Managers has been nothing short of a series of disasters, not properly and carefully covered by the Press.

Robert Bobb, brought in to "solve" a \$400,000,000 debt with the DPS managed to raise the debt by a Billion Dollars and virtually destroyed the DPS by demolishing easily repairable existing buildings, and by messing with the facilities and staffs in a most abrupt and abusive way, and by making appointments of unqualified and inexperienced personnel.

Because My Daughter was enrolled at King I was invited to be on a "Core" committee and witnessed the most corrupt set of procedures imaginable. So many lies were told, and devious procedures were established, with 7 levels of management devised by Walbridge and his "Architect". It was beyond belief. There were loaded meetings, fake Programmers that never programmed the building and they advocated destroying the relatively new High School that was far better built than the new one. The New building is said to have cost \$43,000,000 possibly not including demolition and has classrooms that are too small and is so dreary that the students call it the Prison. The existing gym and pool were in fine operating condition. They, of course, tore them down.

Contrast this with the Thompson Ross High School for Science and Math nearby, and built at the same time, at a cost \$22,000,000, including the land price, and it is absolutely beautiful in strong contrast to the new King.

The EFM involvement was nothing short of a extremely costly disaster and disrupting many lives of faculty and staff and ruining neighborhoods as well. The situation remains horrible, egregious.

Now in the Case of Kevin Orr (not concerning the legal intricacies) the concrete thing that must be pointed out is that the new "Organizational Chart" which is not drawn within the confines of a proper Organizational Chart (as invented by Alfred Sloan in his development of General Motors) is so deficient to the point of being incompetent. Is such incompetence de regueur for extremely high paid Attorneys at 1 to 2k per day with consultants making a reported \$1,000 per hour? The "New" chart has many missing departments that exist, people in highly overburdened positions, does not recognize the distinctions between Line and Staff Functions, completely ignores a properly established planning Department and shows no provision for what all large entities call Facilities.

If that is proposed as being professionally done, then Mr. Orr and company should be summarily dismissed.

It's perfectly clear that EM's and EFM's simply don't work regardless of what some think. They are neither the panacea nor Supermen.

Detroit has been and is being Carpetbagged.

CASE #: 13-53846-SWR. CHAPTER 9  
Judge Stephen W. Rhodes

The source of the public ire in Detroit has cascaded through a series of 3 major catastrophic events over the past twenty years.

(The loss of Recorder's Court might be added to this list.)<sup>END</sup>

### **The Detroit Public School System once considered to be the finest in the Nation.**

There was a major Bond issue some 20 plus years ago to improve the Detroit public Schools. This was a good intention gone wild that left the DPS with a \$400,000,000 debt. There has remained a lot of acrimony about that, blaming the school system.

John Engler was Governor and appointed Barton Mallow (BM) to head up the project. BM apportioned the school buildings to a number of architects, some Minority architects as well and working for Mark English, I was able to see what was going on.

The DPS was an enormous system with over 250 schools and had an architectural staff of some 65 architects. They were kept busy with window replacements because the kids, expressing contempt threw stones at the glass windows. It was said that the cost of replacing broken glass windows was approximately a million dollars a year.

The staff was severely cut down to only one architect. (Architects are needed on staff to assess work properly). Reducing a staff to one placed the school system at risk of bid manipulations. Yes, it happened. Many contractors received projects at as much \$50,000 over the low bid. I think that in one case it reached \$150,000 higher. Kickbacks became a problem. The FreePress covered this.

It was decided that Aluminum framed insulated glass replacements would be used. And it was decided to use plastic windows on the exterior since the newer plastics were much stronger and some also had UV protection against yellowing. Those were universally specified. This was also of good intention but no effort was made to design the perfect window so the designs varied greatly. Some were fine others deficient.

Now it should be pointed out that Construction Managers know nothing about demographics, and while I actually met some consulting demographers from out west, It was clear to me from their answers to my questioning that something fishy was going on. When I asked if they had population curves for each school they indicated that they didn't have them. So virtually every school was specified to have all windows replaced, repaired or replaced roofs, and masonry touch up cleaning and sealing.

This was an enormous effort and being in charge of overseeing the construction of seven schools I was able to establish an opinion of the project which left the DPS with that huge debt. Obviously many schools should have been abandoned with no work other than sealing off, and many schools should have been consolidated. Since the

demographers had not properly done their job the debt occurred.

But I do know what it's like to have a teacher run out from her classroom and hug an Architect exclaiming how wonderful the school is now. Some schools had missing and cracked glass and rotted out frames and sills and the kids were having to wear their snowsuits in the classrooms shivering to death.

What was undertaken was proper but the organization and implementation was highly deficient. Many people blamed the Superintendent. I would blame the demographers and the sole internal Architect and the extreme fee of the Construction Manager. It was mentioned to me later by one roofing contractor who approached the school administration for work that the in-house Architect in the discussion asked the contractor if he liked the poster mounted behind the desk. It was of a somewhat antique airplane and as he rotated to look at it, commented that, "I just love to fly."

Hint not taken in that case.

While I was in charge of 7 schools I witnessed a variety of work quality but was astonished at how beautiful some of the schools were. A number of them could have been transported out to Cranbrook and fit right in without notice.

One particularly beautiful school was named after Dr. Charles Oakman, a Physician and Dentist, who was extrememly interested in Public Health and was involved in the development of the Water and Sewer Department's "Water Works" which was Nationally famous for it's excellence and advancement.

Oakman School was single story in the form of a Greek villa with an atrium. It was designed for children with tuberculosis who could not climb stairs and had many featurse for the handicapped such as handrails along the halls and special physical therapy rooms. The enclosed play yard was a way to separate those infected from the rest of the community. Sadly, while in near perfect condition the current EFM group has chosen to abandon the building although it is working perfectly according to it's engineer.

Schools are anchors to neighborhoods and the larger planning concerns seem now to be ignored out of ignorance of the EFM's newly appointed managers.

Now what needs to be pointed out is that Barton Mallow, the Construction Manager in charge of the whole effort earned a very tidy sum and was found to be the largest contributor to Governor Engler's election Campaign. I have heard the number and it is well into the hundreds of thousands of dollars. Perhaps as much as \$500,000 or more.

And if you visit Barton Mallow's new offices in Southfield you will be astonished to see a building larger than and more lavish than the Guggenheim Museum in NYC. Handing over a huge project to this new and untested category of Construction Manager reverses the long standing practice of placing Architects and Planners in charge to design and document the approach and to oversee conformity to the documents of the work performed.

Clearly CM's know nothing about the vital statistical aspect of Demographics and few know how to properly schedule a project for "Fast Track" construction.

Repairing each and every school in a district losing population is thoughtless and exceedingly costly and burdensome for the future. While there was a lot of carping and blaming at the time mostly directed at Ken Burnley, the Superintendent. Clearly the blame lies upon the shoulders of the Governor at the time, John Engler, a Republican since he dictated the approach and Barton Mallow never heard of demographic studies before. Probably not Engler either.

### **Aggravations and exacerbation's of the School Situation.**

A successful local Paving Contractor decided to stop his enterprise and cash out. He had a social conscience so after closing his company and paying his staff handsomely he decided to give the DPS an enormous sum of money but he wanted to attach some performance criteria.

The DPS indicated that they would accept his money but they would not submit to his criteria for performance. So he withdrew his offer and ended up forming a partnership with Doug Ross, a former Republican Gubernatorial Candidate who was trying to run his University Preparatory Academy for the children of Detroit. The marriage has proven successful with U Prep creating a number of beautiful and exceedingly well run schools often by reworking existing buildings at proper costs. The projects have been cleverly and delightfully designed and have come in at proper costs with no excess. The running of the schools has been exemplary and the children are taught to be polite, helpful, and well dressed.

This has been a great success on many counts but it does not directly help improve public education in Detroit since it is directly competitive. Doug must be commended, perhaps even be placed at the head of the DPS but that would be one extremely large request of him that he might not be willing to take on. He has shown that there are a few Republicans remaining that are Civil, Decent, Respectable and Respectful despite the current rhetoric that is so strident and downright attacking and nasty.

## **The Granholm, Walbridge, Fanning Howey, Robert Bobb EFM recent Effort**

This was a most grandiose situation supposedly to improve the “horrible” situation of the DPS. While it was clear that there were communication problems with the School system and there was knowledge of certain employees cashing in on items such a book purchases and special relations with publishers and suppliers, this effort was handled in outlandish and socially glamorous way.

Robert Bobb was appointed as the the new “Superman” the guy to “solve the problem” of the Detroit Public Schools.

He arrived in one of those huge black suburbans with a bodyguard swat team with AR15's. He was feted by certain socially prominent people with soirees and he put on a fantastic show of authority. He threatened all school personnel about being at work and doing the job and launched into a routine of firing everyone and then interviewing everyone to be reemployed. He was going to put up with no guff or else.

Working with the Ohio based Architectural firm they devised one of the most outlandish organizational systems ever created. The firm was considered by local architects with contempt because they were known for approaching a school by figuring out who the Superintendent and School Board President were and offering them a “free” facilities study. Invariably the study declared the building deficient and must be demolished and then “who better than us” to do your new school? It was a most successful approach financially yet it is considered illegal by the Architectural profession... no freebees to get the job. There was always the taint of kickbacks in the background. And invariably the new school was ineptly designed if not downright ugly. That certainly was true of Grosse Ile's “new” school buildings.

It should be pointed out that Detroit has a number of excellent long term Architectual firms posessing far greater talent than FH... Smith Hinchman, Albert Kahn, Terapata McMahon, and Harley Ellis.

Another aspect of this was that this team pretended to have the inside track with President Obama and his “Race to the Top” effort with improving Education in America. So the “architect” from FH ran around declaring which buildings should be torn down for “deficiencies” and which they would replace.

Since I was an Architect who had a Daughter enrolled at M. L. King I was asked to work on the “Core Committee” representing the school. The grand decision was made and announced to tear down the quite new building for a number of “reasons” which were actually false but in keeping with their approach. When challenged they persisted in their lies. I double checked with one of the famous Black Architects in town, Harold Varner, and he used expletives in discussing their approach and their lies which he also

found unacceptable.

A grand meeting was held at Cobo Hall with all the “vendors” interested and Rainy Hamilton, upon hearing the approach was upset. Rainy and I argued at length with the FH rep and he was immovable. Instead of the Traditional Approach of:

1. Owner
2. Architect
3. General Contractor
4. Subcontractors

He had come up with:

1. Owner
2. Construction Manager (Walbridge)
3. EFM
4. FH or Fanning Howey (Who produced “Bridge Documents”)
5. The Appointed Construction Manager
6. The CM's Architect
7. The CM's Engineers
8. The Minority Architect
9. The minority CM
10. The Subcontracors

After an initial “loaded” meeting at the School. (this means having lots of people being represented as putting forth efforts on the project such as the Programmer that they can bill out at 2.5 to 3 times payroll.)

Of course we never saw them again.

During the meeting the FH architect roughed out how he planned to layout the building. It obviously was terrible and retrogressive, no were near as beautiful as the existing building. We told him that it was unacceptable.

The next meeting the next week he showed up with a set of CAD drawings that were virtually complete.

The Principal was promised that she could have input in the design but that was basically ignored and since she did not know the word atrium he made fun of her and called it the avatar, with a smearing allusion to Amos and Andy.

It was disgusting. And now the Jail debacle appears very similar.

Programming as promised was never performed and there was no attempt to serve the actual needs of the school's program.

As an Architect, I can promise you that to do a proper job it requires digging into the program and working up a fine design and presenting the design for criticism and inclusions. Here there was no such thing. And it cannot be done in a week.

Obviously they dug up a prior project modified it a bit and produced effectively a set of working drawings.

No attempt to solve the specific School needs whatsoever.

Witnessing this I commented that this whole thing was a scam to rush to raise money for the Romney Presidential campaign since Walbridge's John Rakolta was a former brother in law. The presence of Rakolta was glorified by the News' Nolan Finley at the RNC.

They began to pay off and hire people to try and counter the concerns.

The Bond Oversight review committee, was huge but how many Architects or Engineers on the Committee? O! With Rakolta wearing his Burberry raincoat like a mafia member and pacing back and forth chewing gum wildly it was a very sad scene since the head of the committee was supposedly a Harvard trained Architect, now a minister, who never let anyone talk.

The building went up to the disappointment of the Faculty and the kids now call it the Prison since it looks that way, and the Principal reminds me that the classrooms are too small

And yes they tore down the Gym and the Natatorium to put up new ones at the same size. Interesting also is the Bobb had the existing Natatorium repaired and put in working order at an expense of over \$100k, to last only a year.

So the building did get built, the athletic grounds were nicely organized with new grading and new fencing and the project cost over \$43 Million.

Contrast that with the new Thompson/Ross Academy of Math and Science two blocks away at the cost of \$22 million including land and acquisition costs which is stunningly beautiful and interesting.

Obviously Thompson/Ross and their fine local Architect, Francis Recendes who also designed Renaissance High School, know what they are doing yet being frugal and highly creative and tasteful.

The EFM went on to tear down a number of other high schools such as Mumford, Old Cass Tech which could have been the New Commerce and Finney which was the only school actually worth tearing down.

And so we see how they ran up the Debt by a Billion Dollars, never properly accounted for with the FBI refusing to look into the situation and not precipitating forensic accounting so the accounted dispersal of monies is probably lost by now.

To make matters more interesting, Bob was never told to turn this into a building program at all. There was no request or order to redo and build new schools.

Do the students perform better now? Who knows. Solve the debt? Nyet! +1B

But Bobb did ensconce some young white guys into the system and did recommend that they take over and run the system. Any architects on staff? I don't believe that they have even thought of that.

The abusive and dismissive treatment by Roy Roberts, Robert Bobbs successor, of the existing elected school board and staff was noted thoroughly by everyone and despised.

And it should be noted that the EFM's schoolbook purchase was at an outrageous price, said to be the largest contract ever, for the pathetic textbooks now in fashion.

Kumon which works, incidentally, uses small cutsheets of newsprint, black ink.

### **Round Three:**

The third affront is again the dismissive and abusive treatment by Kevin Orr. And his unilateral and illegal filing for bankruptcy for the City and his focus upon the Pension funds as a means to place the City on a path for recovery.

These facts remain about the City:

Racism has been at the heart of the problem.

Abandonment was accelerated by the master plan for Hudson's which included 4 major suburban Shopping Centers designed by Victor Gruen. Northland, Eastland, Westland and Southland and now Oakland and Somerset, and Something Crossing.

The abundance of relatively flat farmland surrounding the city for fake tudor houses.

There has been no Planning in the City for over 40 years since Charles Blessing retired despite the fact that there are lots of people at City Hall with that title on their badges. They are not trained Architect/Planners.

All of this could have been forseen and solutions developed years ago providing that a proper planning commission with Architect-Planners in control like Blessing and Gerry Crane who created the Detroit Medical Center and set the stage for the vital area, Midtown.

The Michigan State Housing Development authority abandoned it's initial charge to build townhouses in Detroit in favor of funding single family houses in the very rural outback of Michigan. We have 3 classes now. Urbanites, Suburbanites, and Boon Dockers

Whites are returning in droves since it was realized that distant suburban sprawl is horrible. The bike tour on Saturday verifies that... thousands cycling around the city.

And I understand that the Governor has the right to force consolidation into a single metropolis called Detroit. He won't do it. But it is necessary. You don't get to walk across that imaginary line called the city boundary, turn around and point back yelling, "you are incapable of anything".

So the take away from all these shenanigans, now it is that the public of Detroit despises the Republican Party and its effective attempt to end suffrage and choice for Black People.

Humiliating, demeaning, exacerbating, and insulting, a spit in the face.

The Carpetbagging must cease. It appears that if it continues to be practiced we may well have some very difficult times. *These were precipitated by the Republican insiders.*

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